

PHILIP R. RICE.

MAY 26, 1842.

Read, and laid upon the table.

Mr. PARMENTER, from the Committee on Revolutionary Claims, submitted the following

REPORT:

*The Committee on Revolutionary Claims, to which was referred the petition of Philip R. Rice, report:*

The said Rice sets forth that, in the year 1781, he was owner of a small schooner called the *Madam Taylor*, the cost of which was twenty-two hundred dollars, and that said vessel was employed in trading on the Potomac, York, and James rivers; and that, during said employment, and shortly before the British general, Cornwallis, took possession of Yorktown, he, with his vessel and crew, were impressed into the service of the United States, by Robert Radford and Micajah Crews, officers in the impress service, for the purpose of transporting munitions of war, military and quartermaster's stores, from the town of Cumberland to Taylor's ferry; and that the said officers were with him on that trip, and superintended the loading and unloading of the cargo. The officers, as he states, then directed him to go to Newcastle for a cargo of flour, cannon, shot, shells, and pork, to be transported to York, which he did, and on his return was attacked by the British, and was obliged to scuttle and abandon his vessel. The petitioner thinks his vessel was worth twenty-two hundred dollars, and that she was in the service of the United States between three and four months. The testimony in support of the allegations is as follows:

John Butler deposes that he was acquainted with Philip R. Rice until 1797, who was owner of a small trading vessel during the revolutionary war, and that, when the deponent left King William county, which was about nine months before the capture of Cornwallis, Mr. Rice's vessel was in Pomomkey river, and when he returned she had gone, and he never saw her again.

Samuel S. Rice deposes to the same effect, with the addition that he knew the vessel was in the employ of the United States two or three months before she was taken, and that he was on board the vessel when she carried the cannon from Cumberland to Taylor's ferry.

Major Hudson states that, from information derived from records of his parents, he knows there was a small trading vessel impressed into the employment of the United States by Robert Radford, an officer having charge

of the impressment service, and that she was employed in carrying munitions of war from port to port, and he speaks particularly of the transportation of the cannon from Cumberland. He further states that, some time after the cannon were delivered at Taylor's ferry, the vessel was loaded with provisions and munitions of war for Little York, and was destroyed by the British. The deponent also states that he assisted in the effort to raise the vessel; thinks she was in the employ of the United States; that she was worth about three thousand dollars, or eighteen dollars per day when employed.

John Young knew Philip R. Rice, and that he owned a small vessel called the Madam Taylor, which was worth about twenty-five hundred dollars, and that she was impressed into the service of the United States, and so remained until destroyed by the British, and was worth on charter five hundred dollars.

These are the material facts certified to by the witnesses. Claims of this description, allowed to remain so long without being made, have not been received favorably by Congress, even when the facts appear well sustained, as settlements were referred to the respective States; but, in this case, there is, in the opinion of the committee, a great doubt whether Mr. Rice ever had a good demand. It will be seen that the witnesses state, almost uniformly, only their impression. From all the circumstances presented, the committee infer that the vessel was probably impressed into the service, for the purpose of transporting cannon from Cumberland to Taylor's ferry, but, after that, she was engaged on freight at the owner's risk. This inference is supported by the fact that the United States officers were on board at the time of the transportation of cannon from Cumberland to Taylor's ferry, but not afterwards. The petitioner has also omitted, both at the time and since, to obtain evidence from the officers in the impress service, notwithstanding he states, in his petition, the residence of both.

The committee have inquired of the proper department at Washington, and of the auditor of Virginia, in relation to this claim, and have been answered that there is nothing which throws any light on the subject. If the demand had been good, it seems exceedingly probable that Mr. Rice would have applied to the State of Virginia for payment. The committee recommend that the claim be rejected.